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'Suicide Shouldn't Be a Secret" An Assessment of Adolescent Coping Strategies following a Suicide Prevention Program

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ABSTRACT

The following study aimed to assess coping strategies in adolescents following a suicide prevention program conducted by the South African Depression and Anxiety Group. The study aimed to assess whether there was a change in coping strategies in adolescents following the suicide prevention program. Suicide ideation was measured using the Positive and Negative Suicide Ideation Scale (PANSI) and Coping Strategies was measured using the Coping Across Situations Questionnaire (CASQ). Data was collected on 74 individuals in Grade 11 (26 males and 48 females). It was found that positive suicide ideation was not significantly different for males and females before the intervention, while females scored higher than males on the negative suicide ideation scale, indicating that females have more thoughts about suicide than males. There was no significant difference between positive and negative suicide ideation scores for both females and males following the suicide prevention program. The results further indicate that *Active Coping; Internal Coping* and *Withdrawal Coping* were not significantly different for boys and girls in the pre-test, as well as in the post test. A negative relationship appears to exist between post PANSI negative ideation and Active Coping, which means that individuals who use more active coping have fewer thoughts about suicide. Active Coping is strongly related to Internal Coping and moderately related to *Withdrawal Coping*. Also, Internal coping is moderately related to Withdrawal Coping. The implications are that caregivers and professionals can begin to assess individual adolescent suicide ideation levels through an understanding of the individual's coping strategy. Further research should be conducted in other socio-economic regions and rural and urban areas could

be compared to get a holistic view of coping strategies and suicide ideation levels in South Africa, as a country.